

and extinguishing systems. Like firefighters, police officers and emergency medical technicians respond to emergencies and save lives.

Sources of Additional Information

Information about a career as a firefighter may be obtained from local fire departments and from:

☛ International Association of Firefighters, 1750 New York Ave. NW., Washington, DC 20006.

Internet: <http://www.iaff.org/iaff/index.html>

☛ U.S. Fire Administration, 16825 South Seton Ave., Emmitsburg, MD 21727.

Information about firefighter professional qualifications and a list of colleges and universities offering 2- or 4-year degree programs in fire science or fire prevention may be obtained from:

☛ National Fire Academy, Degrees at a Distance Program, 16825 South Seton Ave., Emmitsburg, MD 21727.

Internet: <http://www.usfa.fema.gov/nfa/index.htm>

Guards

(O*Net 63047)

Significant Points

- Favorable opportunities are expected for lower paying jobs, but stiff competition is likely for higher-paying positions at facilities requiring a high level of security, such as nuclear plants and government installations.
- Some positions, such as those of armored car guards, are hazardous.
- Because of limited formal training requirements and flexible hours, this occupation attracts many individuals seeking a second or part-time job.

Nature of the Work

Guards, who are also called security officers, patrol and inspect property to protect against fire, theft, vandalism, and illegal activity. These workers protect their employer's investment, enforce laws on the property, and deter criminal activity or other problems. They use radio and telephone communications to call for assistance from an ambulance, wrecker, or the police or fire departments as the situation dictates. Security guards write comprehensive reports outlining their observations and activities during their assigned shift. They may also interview witnesses or victims, prepare case reports, and testify in court.

Although all security guards perform many of the same duties, specific duties vary based on whether the guard works in a "static" security position or on a mobile patrol. Guards assigned to static security positions usually serve the client at one location for a specific length of time. These guards must become closely acquainted with the property and people associated with it, complete all tasks assigned them, and often monitor alarms and closed circuit TV cameras. In contrast, guards assigned to mobile patrol duty drive or walk from location to location and conduct security checks within an assigned geographical zone. They may detain or arrest criminal violators, answer service calls concerning criminal activity or problems, and issue traffic violation warnings.

Specific job responsibilities also vary with the size, type, and location of the employer. In department stores, guards protect people, records, merchandise, money, and equipment. They often work with undercover store detectives to prevent theft by customers or store employees and help in the apprehension of shoplifting suspects prior to arrival by police. In office buildings, banks, and hospitals, guards maintain order and protect the institutions' property, staff, and customers. At air, sea, and rail terminals and other transportation facilities, guards protect people, freight, property, and equipment. They



Guard positions are frequently filled through contracts with industrial security firms and commercial guard agencies.

may screen passengers and visitors for weapons and explosives using metal detectors and high-tech equipment, ensure nothing is stolen while being loaded or unloaded, and watch for fires and criminals.

Guards who work in public buildings such as museums or art galleries protect paintings and exhibits by inspecting people and packages entering and leaving the building. In factories, laboratories, government buildings, data processing centers, and military bases, security officers protect information, products, computer codes, and defense secrets. They check the credentials of people and vehicles entering and leaving the premises. Guards working at universities, parks, and sports stadiums perform crowd control, supervise parking and seating, and direct traffic. Security guards stationed at the entrance to bars and places of adult entertainment, such as nightclubs, prevent access by minors, collect cover charges at the door, maintain order among customers, and protect property and patrons.

Armored car guards protect money and valuables during transit. In addition, they protect individuals responsible for making commercial bank deposits from theft or bodily injury. When the armored car arrives at the door of a business, an armed guard enters, signs for the money, and returns to the truck with the valuables in hand. The return to the truck with the money and taking the deposits into the bank can be extremely hazardous for the guard, and a number of them have been robbed and shot in recent years, so armored car guards usually wear bullet-proof vests.

All security officers must show good judgment and common sense, follow directions and directives from supervisors, accurately testify in court, and follow company policy and guidelines. Guards should have

a professional appearance and attitude and be able to interact with the public. They also must be able to take charge and direct others in emergencies or other dangerous incidents. In a large organization, the security manager is often in charge of a trained guard force divided into shifts; whereas in a small organization, a single worker may be responsible for all security.

Working Conditions

Most guards spend considerable time on their feet, either assigned to a specific post or patrolling buildings and grounds. Guards may be stationed at a guard desk inside a building to monitor electronic security and surveillance devices or to check the credentials of persons entering or leaving the premises. They also may be stationed outside at a guardhouse of the sort found at gated communities and use a portable radio or telephone that allows them to be in constant contact with a central station outside the guarded area. Guard work is usually routine, but guards must be constantly alert for threats to themselves and the property they are protecting. Guards who work during the day may have a great deal of contact with other employees and members of the public.

Guards usually work at least 8-hour shifts for 40 hours per week and are often on call in case an emergency arises. Some employers have three shifts, and guards rotate to equally divide daytime, weekend, and holiday work. Guards usually eat on the job instead of taking a regular break away from the site.

Employment

Guards held over 1 million jobs in 1998. Industrial security firms and guard agencies employed 60 percent of all wage and salary guards. These organizations provide security services on a contract basis, assigning their guards to buildings and other sites as needed. Most other security officers were employed by the organization they are responsible for guarding, such as banks, building management companies, hotels, hospitals, retail stores, restaurants, bars, schools, and government. Guard jobs are found throughout the country, most commonly in metropolitan areas. Over 1 in 4 guards worked part time, and many individuals held a second job as a guard to supplement their primary earnings.

A significant number of law-enforcement officers work as security guards when off-duty to supplement their incomes. Often working in uniform and with the official cars assigned to them, they add a high profile security presence to the establishment with which they have contracted. At construction sites and apartment complexes, for example, their presence often prevents trouble before it starts. Some shopping centers and theaters have officers mounted on horses or bicycles continuously ride around their parking lots to deter car theft and robberies. (Police and detectives are discussed separately in this section of the *Handbook*.)

Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement

Most States require that guards be licensed. To be licensed as a guard, individuals must usually be at least 18 years old, pass a background check, and complete classroom training in such subjects as property rights, emergency procedures, and detention of suspected criminals. Drug testing is often required, and may be random and ongoing.

Many employers of unarmed guards do not have any specific educational requirements. For armed guards, employers usually prefer individuals who are high school graduates or hold an equivalent certification. Many jobs require a driver's license. For positions as armed guards, employers often seek people who have had responsible experience in other occupations.

Guards who carry weapons must be licensed by the appropriate government authority, and some receive further certification as special police officers, which allows them to make limited types of arrests while on duty. Armed guard positions have more stringent background checks and entry requirements than those of unarmed guards because

of greater insurance liability risks. Compared to unarmed security guards, armed guards and special police typically enjoy higher earnings and benefits, greater job security, more advancement potential, and are usually given more training and responsibility.

Rigorous hiring and screening programs consisting of background checks and criminal record file and fingerprint checks are becoming the norm in the occupation. Applicants are expected to have good character references, no serious police record, and good health. They should be mentally alert, emotionally stable, and physically fit in order to cope with emergencies. Guards who have frequent contact with the public should communicate well.

Candidates for guard jobs in the Federal Government must have some experience in the occupation and pass a written examination in order to be certified by the General Services Administration. Armed Forces experience is an asset. For Federal guard positions, applicants must also qualify in the use of firearms and pass a test on first aid.

The amount of training guards receive varies. Training requirements are higher for armed guards because their employers are legally responsible for any use of force. Armed guards receive formal training in areas such as weapons retention and laws covering the use of force.

Many employers give newly hired guards instruction before they start the job and also provide on-the-job training. An increasing number of States are making ongoing training a legal requirement for retention of certification. Guards may receive training in protection, public relations, report writing, crisis deterrence, first aid, as well as specialized training relevant to their particular assignment.

Guards employed at establishments placing a heavy emphasis on security usually receive extensive formal training. For example, guards at nuclear power plants undergo several months of training before being placed on duty under close supervision. They are taught to use firearms, administer first aid, operate alarm systems and electronic security equipment, and spot and deal with security problems. Guards authorized to carry firearms may be periodically tested in their use.

Although guards in small companies may receive periodic salary increases, advancement opportunities are limited. Most large organizations use a military type of ranking that offers the possibility of advancement in position and salary. Some guards may advance to supervisor or security manager positions. Guards with management skills may open their own contract security guard agencies.

Job Outlook

Opportunities for most jobs as guards should be very favorable through the year 2008. Numerous job openings will stem from employment growth attributable to the desire for increased security, and from the need to replace those who leave this large occupation each year. Many opportunities are expected for persons seeking full-time employment, as well as for those seeking part-time or second jobs. However, competition is expected for higher-paying positions that require longer periods of training; these positions are usually found at facilities that require a high level of security, such as nuclear power plants or weapons installations.

Employment of guards is expected to grow faster than the average for all occupations through 2008, as increased concern about crime, vandalism, and terrorism will heighten the need for security. Demand for guards will also grow as private security firms increasingly perform duties, such as monitoring crowds at airports and providing security in courts, which were formerly handled by government police officers and marshals. Because enlisting the services of a security guard firm is easier and less costly than assuming direct responsibility for hiring, training, and managing a security guard force, job growth is expected to be concentrated among contract security guard agencies.

Earnings

Median annual earnings of guards were \$16,240 in 1998. The middle 50 percent earned between \$13,430 and \$20,110. The lowest 10 percent had earnings of less than \$11,970, while the top 10 percent earned

over \$26,640. Median annual earnings in the industries employing the largest numbers of guards in 1997 are shown below.

Real estate operators and lessors	\$20,300
Hospitals	19,500
Hotels and motels	18,000
Miscellaneous amusement and recreation services	15,800
Miscellaneous business services	14,800

Depending on their experience, newly hired guards in the Federal Government earned \$16,400 or \$18,400 a year in 1999. Beginning salaries were slightly higher in selected areas where the prevailing local pay level was higher. Guards employed by the Federal Government averaged about \$26,300 a year in early 1999. These workers usually receive overtime pay as well as a wage differential for the second and third shifts.

Related Occupations

Guards protect property, maintain security, and enforce regulations and standards of conduct in the establishments at which they work. Related security and protective service occupations include law enforcement officers, bailiffs, correctional officers, house or store detectives, and private investigators.

Sources of Additional Information

Further information about work opportunities for guards is available from local security and guard firms and State employment service offices. Information about licensing requirements for guards may be obtained from the State licensing commission or the State police department. In States where local jurisdictions establish licensing requirements, contact a local government authority such as the sheriff, county executive, or city manager.

Police and Detectives

(O*Net 21911C, 61005, 63011A, 63011B, 63014A, 63014B, 63021, 63023, 63026, 63028A, 63028B, 63032, 63038, and 63041)

Significant Points

- Police work can be dangerous and stressful.
- The number of qualified candidates exceeds the number of job openings in Federal and State law enforcement agencies but is inadequate to meet growth and replacement needs in many local and special police departments.
- The largest number of employment opportunities will arise in urban communities with relatively low salaries and high crime rates.

Nature of the Work

People depend on police officers and detectives to protect their lives and property. Law enforcement officers, some of whom are State or Federal special agents or inspectors, perform these duties in a variety of ways, depending on the size and type of their organization. In most jurisdictions, they are expected to exercise authority when necessary, whether on or off duty.

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, about 65 percent of State and local law enforcement officers are uniformed personnel, who regularly patrol and respond to calls for service. Police officers who work in small communities and rural areas have general law enforcement duties. They may direct traffic at the scene of a fire, investigate a burglary, or give first aid to an accident victim. In large police departments, officers usually are assigned to a specific type of duty. Many urban police agencies are becoming more involved in

community policing—a practice in which an officer builds relationships with the citizens of local neighborhoods and mobilizes the public to help fight crime.

Police agencies are usually organized into geographic districts, with uniformed officers assigned to patrol a specific area, such as part of the business district or outlying residential neighborhoods. Officers may work alone, but in large agencies they often patrol with a partner. While on patrol, officers attempt to become thoroughly familiar with their patrol area and remain alert for anything unusual. Suspicious circumstances and hazards to public safety are investigated or noted, and officers are dispatched to individual calls for assistance within their district. During their shift, they may identify, pursue, and arrest suspected criminals, resolve problems within the community, and enforce traffic laws.

Some police officers specialize in such diverse fields as chemical and microscopic analysis, training and firearms instruction, or handwriting and fingerprint identification. Others work with special units such as horseback, bicycle, motorcycle or harbor patrol, canine corps, or special weapons and tactics (SWAT) or emergency response teams. About 1 in 10 local and special law enforcement officers perform jail-related duties, and around 4 percent work in courts. Regardless of job duties or location, police officers and detectives at all levels must write reports and maintain meticulous records that will be needed if they testify in court.

Detectives are plainclothes investigators who gather facts and collect evidence for criminal cases. Some are assigned to interagency task forces to combat specific types of crime. They conduct interviews, examine records, observe the activities of suspects, and participate in raids or arrests. Detectives and State and Federal agents and inspectors usually specialize in one of a wide variety of violations such as homicide or fraud. They are assigned cases on a rotating basis and work on them until an arrest and conviction occurs or until the case is dropped.

Sheriffs and deputy sheriffs enforce the law on the county level. Sheriffs are usually elected to their posts and perform duties similar to those of a local or county police chief. Sheriffs' departments tend to be relatively small, most having fewer than 25 sworn officers. A deputy sheriff in a large agency will have similar specialized law enforcement duties as an officer in an urban police department. Nationwide, about 40 percent of full-time sworn deputies are uniformed officers assigned to patrol and respond to calls, 12 percent are investigators, 30 percent are assigned to jail-related duties, and 11 percent perform court-related duties, with the balance in administration. Police and sheriffs' deputies who provide security in city and county courts are sometimes called bailiffs.

State police officers (sometimes called State troopers or highway patrol officers) arrest criminals Statewide and patrol highways to enforce motor vehicle laws and regulations. Uniformed officers are best known for issuing traffic citations to motorists who violate the law. At the scene of accidents, they may direct traffic, give first aid, and call for emergency equipment. They also write reports used to determine the cause of the accident. State police officers are frequently called upon to render assistance to other law enforcement agencies.

State law enforcement agencies operate in every State except Hawaii. Seventy percent of the full-time sworn personnel in the 49 State police agencies are uniformed officers who regularly patrol and respond to calls for service. Fifteen percent are investigators; 2 percent are assigned to court-related duties; and the remaining 13 percent work in administrative or other assignments.

Public college and university police forces, public school district police, and agencies serving transportation systems and facilities are examples of special police agencies. There are more than 1,300 of these agencies with special geographic jurisdictions or enforcement responsibilities in the United States. More than three-fourths of the sworn personnel in special agencies are uniformed officers, and about 15 percent are investigators.

The Federal Government maintains a high profile in many areas of law enforcement. The Department of Justice is the largest employer of sworn Federal officers. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) agents are the Government's principal investigators, responsible for